

NOVA SCOTIA
Gaming
support
4 culture



Zach Colangelo, she/they, Shakespeare by the Sea

2026



THEATRE NOVA SCOTIA



ROBERT MERRITT AWARDS

NOVA SCOTIA

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Gaming
support
4 culture

nukleo,

WE ARE IN MI'KMA'KI

The unceded, unsurrendered
territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

The 2026 Merritt awards are taking place in Punamu'kwati'jk, the place of the tomcod (or salmon), which sits next to Kijipuktuk, the great harbour.

This territory is covered by the "treaties of peace and friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik Peoples first signed with the British crown in 1725. These treaties did not deal with the surrender of land and resources, but instead recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

Visit placenames.mapdev.ca to learn more about the name of the place that you are on and what it means.

[We are all treaty people.](#)

TNS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CO-CHAIRS: Elsa Pihl and Ken Schwartz
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Adriana Hansen, Sébastien Labelle,
Briana Lynch, & Jenn Priddle

THEATRE NOVA SCOTIA'S CO-CHAIRS MESSAGE

Friends,

Six years ago, the theatre community was facing an existential crisis. The pandemic was a mere two weeks old, and although the Merritt Awards in 2020 did go ahead, they were entirely online, one of the first award shows in Canada to make that shift.

In the intervening 6 years, there was a long struggle for recovery for many artists and organizations. But we regained the ability to gather and our audiences began to come back, year after year, season after season. And the work of Nova Scotian Theatre artists in the last year, which we will celebrate tonight, is a tribute to our resilience, artistic and otherwise, and our collective work as a community.

But in the last month, we unexpectedly faced another existential crisis- this one a result of the actions of our own Provincial government. The same institution that protected our sector during the pandemic is now threatening our ability to thrive.

This might be the greatest test of our community to date. And yet, as we write this, we have proven how resourceful, collaborative, compassionate and smart we are- as individuals and as a sector. And we will not back down from this struggle until we reach our goals.

But tonight, amongst the fierce headwinds we face, we take an evening to fully celebrate, without a trace of reservation, the wonderful and inspiring work of our artists. After all, it represents everything we are currently fighting for. This work is what makes this struggle worth every letter, every rally and every call to action.

So raise a glass and give a cheer. You all deserve it.

Elsa Pihl & Ken Schwartz
Co-Chairs, Theatre Nova Scotia

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Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre

OUTSTANDING NEW
NOVA SCOTIAN PLAY



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
UNIVERSITY

OUTSTANDING NEW
ADAPTATION BY A NS
PLAYWRIGHT



OUTSTANDING
PERFORMANCE BY
AN ENSEMBLE



OUTSTANDING
PERFORMANCE IN A
LEADING ROLE



OUTSTANDING
DIRECTION



ACADIA THEATRE COMPANY
ACADIA
UNIVERSITY

OUTSTANDING
SCENIC DESIGN



OUTSTANDING
SOUND DESIGN



OUTSTANDING
TECHNICIAN



OUTSTANDING
COSTUME DESIGN



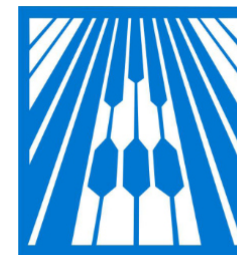
OUTSTANDING
CHOREOGRAPHY

ACTRA

OUTSTANDING
SUPPORTING ROLE



OUTSTANDING
INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION



AIEL
OUTSTANDING
LIGHTING DESIGN



OUTSTANDING
STAGE MANAGER



OUTSTANDING
PRODUCTION

ACT ONE

Theatre Nova Scotia Welcome

Land Welcome

Support4Culture

Opening Routine

Outstanding Emerging Artist Award

Outstanding Choreography Award

Outstanding Projection Design Award

Outstanding New Nova Scotian Adaptation Award

Outstanding Lighting Design Award

Outstanding Fight Direction Award

Outstanding Performance in a Supporting Role Award

Outstanding Musical Direction Award

In Memoriam

April Hubbard Creative Access Award

Theatre Nova Scotia Legacy Award

20 MINUTE INTERMISSION



ACT TWO

Welcome Back

Outstanding Stage Manager Award

Outstanding Technician Award

Outstanding Volunteer Award

Outstanding Sound Design Award

Outstanding Costume Design Award

Outstanding Scenic Design Award

Outstanding Original Score or Composition Award

Outstanding Direction Award

Outstanding New Nova Scotian Play Award

Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble Award

Outstanding Independent Production Award

Outstanding Performance in a Leading Role Award

Outstanding Production Award

Thank You

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JURORS

The Robert Merritt Awards have been recognizing outstanding work in professional Nova Scotian theatre since 2002. All year long, a volunteer jury of 8-10 members attend theatre productions all across Mi'kma'ki / Nova Scotia. Each year an average of 35-50 productions are juried.

This creates an opportunity for our members to survey the wide landscape of our provincial theatre scene and to witness the many adventures theatre professionals embark on through their chosen type of performance.

Theatre Nova Scotia wishes to thank the 2025 Merritt Jury, whose tremendous commitment and herculean effort made this evening possible:

Akshay Shirke
Jade Douris-O'Hara
Janet Burbidge
Jessica Barry
Kyle Gillis
Natasha Thomas
Nicola Lannan
Sophie Schade
Zoë Comeau

THEATRE NOVA SCOTIA STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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MERRITT AWARD PRODUCERS
Dan Bray & Kat McCormack

SUSAN LEBLANC

MLA Dartmouth North

Proud to
Support
The 2026
Merritt Awards



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Theatre Nova Scotia
Robert Merritt Awards



**Claudia
Chender**

MLA, Dartmouth South

Your Voice in the
Nova Scotia Legislature

claudiachender@nsmmla.ca | 902-406-2301

2026 MERRITTS TEAM

PRODUCERS: Dan Bray & Kat McCormack
LAND WELCOME: Raymond Sewell
PERFORMERS: Liam Fair, Katherine Norris & Jeff Schwager
SHOWCASE DESIGNER: Brenda Duran
VIDEO EDITOR: Zach Faye
TECHNICIANS: Chloe, Dan Morash, Richard, Jacob Ferguson & Mark Bachynski
ASL INTERPRETERS: Mae Striteman and Monica Clarke
MERRITT MINDERS: Cadence Cook, Eden Reshef, Jessie Sanders & Mia Larche
PHOTOBOOTH: Booth Almighty
DJ: Ben McMillan (DJ Sneaky B)
SLIDESHOW GRAPHICS: Dan Bray
SLIDESHOW TECHNICIAN: Tegan Porter
PROGRAM DESIGN: Colleen Arcturus Maclsaac
SPECIAL THANKS TO: James MacLean, Meghan Tansey Whitton & Riley Smith

ABOUT THEATRE NOVA SCOTIA

Theatre Nova Scotia is a registered charity dedicated to celebrating and uplifting live theatre in Nova Scotia. We serve all areas of theatre arts across the province including: professional theatre companies, community theatre companies, individual theatre artists, and educators from all levels of schools and universities.

We celebrate theatre with three major programs annually - the Robert Merritt Theatre Awards, the PERFORM! Artists in Schools program, and the Nova Scotia High School Drama Festival.

Visit us at theatrens.ca
or @theatrens

Proudly supporting the 2026 Robert Merritt Awards



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**Councillor
Laura White**
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311

HALIFAX

PRESENTERS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

Colleen Arcturus Maclsaac, Hilary Adams & Ian Sherwood, Liam Oko & Gina Thornhill, Sébastien Labelle & Chris O'Neill, Gil Anderson & Lou Campbell, Jessie Walker & Ella MacDonald, Mary Fay Coady & Patrick Jeffrey, Diego Cavedon Dias & Diego Guerrero, Sara Graham, Heather Lewis, Helena Marriott, Diana MacKinnon, Michelle Langille & Sarah Prosper, Alex Mills & Sven (Rachel Lloyd), Lisa Phinney Langley & Lisa Nasson, Matt Lacas & Laura Teasdale, Garrett Barker & Stewart Legere, Santiago Guzmán & Lara Lewis, FSPA 3rd Year Acting Students: Aidan Cochrane, Brady Poirier, Safiya Doyle, Alex Robichaud, Katherine Alexander, Liel Kiznerman, Ava Antle, River Moser, Sarah Rees, Chloe Rockwell-MacLeod, Tjasa Allen, Grace Magro, Ciel Crosby & Rosie Porter, James MacLean & Stephanie MacDonald, Ben Stone & Emmy Alcorn